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Dear Sir/Madam,

I strongly oppose proposed changes to the food code, allowing a wide range of GM foods to be sold without independent safety assessments or labelling.

Australians expect our government to create regulations that ensures both the safety of our food as well as our right to know what is in our food.

All genetic modification of foods makes a range of assumptions around our understanding of how gene regulation works at a cellular level. And given my experience working at the laboratory bench on molecular genetics of bacteria for over a decade, I fully appreciate the incredible amount that scientists have revealed, particularly in recent years. However, cells are complex systems, and we still know precious little about how the millions of molecular events that occur in each cell cycle. As such, we should assume that any attempts at genetic modification are likely to include off-target effects...creating new molecules or combinations of molecules that might take years to affect human health and the broader environment health, on which we depend.

The overwhelming majority of Australians are opposed to GM foods and what's more, people are moving towards eating healthier and more nutritious foods. By allowing agrochemical companies and scientists (which rely on them for funding and/or employment) to self-regulate their own products is completely unacceptable. If FSANZ can't afford to fund independent assessment for health and environmental hazards and risks, and maintain a transparent and traceable system of GM labelling, then they should simply ban these foods.

Sincerely,

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